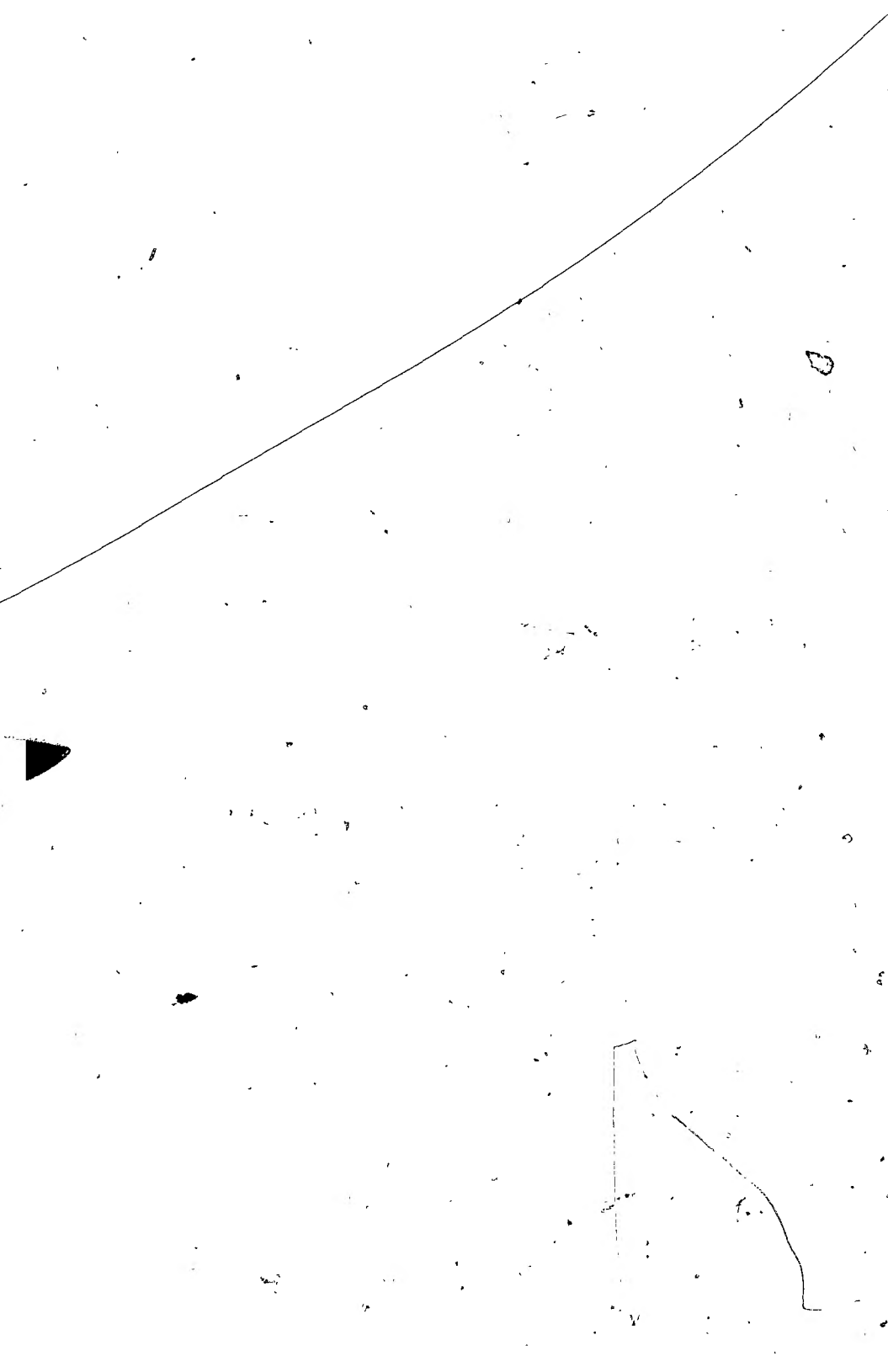


Red River Rebellion, 1870-71

The Red River Insurrection

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THE RED RIVER INSURRECTION:

THREE LETTERS

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REG. A.

A NARRATIVE OF EVENTS.

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THE ABORIGINES' PROTECTION SOCIETY.

7, ADAM STREET, ADELPHI, LONDON.

—
1870.

INTRODUCTION.

Not only has the outbreak at the Red River Settlement excited considerable interest in this country, but it can hardly be said that the subject itself is of secondary importance. A distant settlement has taken up arms in defence of what it believes to be its rights, and the Imperial Government is unexpectedly called upon to exert an authority which, in the Hudson's Bay Territories, has too long lain dormant. The rising is called a "rebellion," but it would be difficult to prove that this characterisation of it is altogether justified by the circumstances of the case. Whatever may have been the ulterior designs of an insignificant minority, the arms of the Red River people have not been directed against England. On the contrary, English, Scotch, French and Indians generally entertain as hearty a feeling of loyalty towards the Queen as the inhabitants of any more settled colony. It is true that one half of the population have forcibly prevented a party of Canadian officials, with Lieutenant Governor M'Dougall at their head, from entering their country; but at the very time Mr. M'Dougall was engaged in issuing the singular Proclamation in which Colonel Dennis was empowered, in the name of the Queen, "to assault, fire upon, pull down or break into, any fort, house, stronghold, or any other place in which armed men may be found," the Canadian Government had ordered its agents to withhold from the Hudson's Bay Company payment of the purchase money, amounting to the sum of 300,000*l*. The Company being, as the governing power, virtually in a moribund condition; and Canada having, for a time at least, withdrawn from her bargain, what authority is there which the people of the country are bound to respect? Manifestly the time has arrived when the Imperial Government is called upon to exercise its own paramount functions, and to interpose between the contending parties in the interest of peace and justice.

This difficulty has not been unforeseen, although it was, of course, impossible to anticipate the exact shape it would assume. When

a deputation from the Aborigines' Protection Society waited upon Lord Granville in March of last year, Mr. Isbister, who is well known for his long advocacy of the rights of his fellow countrymen, said:—

"In his view of the matter the question was not altogether between the Hudson's Bay Company and Canada, how dearly the one might sell and the other might buy, but that there was a third party, viz. the inhabitants of the country itself, who had a right to look to the Imperial Government to protect their interests; and who, unfortunately, had no representative in these transactions. He would venture to impress on the noble lord the importance of making some definite arrangement at the outset, instead of leaving the question to crop up hereafter, when it might prove a source of disputes, and probably of Indian wars."

If the course then suggested had been pursued, the complication which has since endangered the security of so many important public interests would never have arisen; the terms upon which the Red River people were to enter the Confederation would have been settled; and the Canadian authorities, instead of being driven out as enemies, would have been received as friends. It is, we know, easy to be wise after the event, but it is also sometimes not difficult to be wise before the event.

Too much stress cannot be laid upon the fact that the inhabitants of the Red River Settlement are not only as much qualified to enjoy self-governing institutions as the inhabitants of British Columbia or Prince Edward Island, but that they have, for many years, practically managed their own local affairs. And who are these "half breeds" who have proved themselves to be the pioneers of civilization in a remote wilderness of North America? Mr. Isbister, in a letter addressed to Mr. R. N. Fowler, M.P., long before this outbreak occurred, answers the question:—

"The mixed race, from the intermarriage during many generations of the Hudson's Bay Company's officers and servants with the native Indians and their descendants, has increased to such an extent, that it now forms the dominant class in many parts of Rupert's Land. Many of them, having inherited the fortunes made by their fathers in the fur trade, and become possessed of landed and other valuable property at the Red River Settlement, are persons of considerable wealth and intelligence. Among them may be found graduates of Universities in England, Canada, and the United States, where they have proceeded to complete their

education; and whenever they have settled in those countries, as several of them have done, they may be found, as also in Rupert's Land, following with success the professions of barristers, clergymen, medical men, teachers in colleges and schools, editors of newspapers, &c., exhibiting in these, the most intellectual walks of life, qualifications which denote a high capacity for civilization. The link which they constitute between Europeans and Indians forms an element in dealing with the country, the importance of which is not easy to overrate."

This statement will, we hope, correct the misapprehensions which exist in some quarters concerning the mixed population of the Red River. It should satisfy every one that they are a people who may be trusted with self-government, and that it is the duty of the Imperial Government to deal with them on principles similar to those which are considered applicable to other bodies of Colonists in North America.

14th February, 1870.

THE RED RIVER INSURRECTION.

LETTER I.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR,—The insurrection at Red River is one of those untoward events which so frequently baffle the calculations of statesmen and compel the attention of the public to subjects which are little understood and less cared for. As I fear that there is, at the present moment, in many quarters a disposition to underrate the importance of this unexpected outbreak, and an unwillingness to search deep enough for the causes which have provoked it, I venture to trouble you with a few remarks upon this, the latest of our colonial difficulties.

It is unnecessary that I should dwell upon the past history of the Red River Settlement—the one *nucleus* of civilization in Rupert's Land, although that history is, from the period of the foundation of the little colony by Lord Selkirk down to the present moment, full of interest. No one is better acquainted with the subject than the present Prime Minister; and no one who has gone over the ground as he has done will be tempted to dispute the truth of the remark which has been attributed to him—that the inquiry was one of the most “romantic” a statesman could engage in. If we take only the ethnological point of view, we find that on the banks of the Red River and the Assiniboine the question of how to save the red man from that process of extermination which is his supposed destiny appears well-nigh to have reached a satisfactory solution. The intermarriage of Scotch factors and French *voyageurs* with women of the Indian tribes has led to an amalgamation of races which has proved reconcilable with the existence of a high degree of civilization. Education has always been a characteristic of this mixed population; and, in consequence, many of the natives of Red River have attained to high positions in Canada and the mother country. Occasionally they may be alarmed by the hostile demeanour of a band of Sioux, or by incursions of wandering and warlike Indians from the American side of the frontier; but their normal relations with their kinsmen of the pure Indian type are as peaceful and friendly as could be desired, while among the latter there are many who have made exemplary progress in civilization. As an illustration of the last fact I may state that in 1857 I was able to offer the following testimony in a letter which was addressed to Mr. Labouchere (the late Lord Taunton), who was then chairman of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the affairs of the Hudson's Bay territories:—

“The settlement over which the Chief Peguis presides is a

remarkable example of the improvement of which the Indian race is capable. The majority of the tribe are settled down as farmers; but, singularly enough, they furnish the only harness-makers and tinsmiths which the Red River Settlement possesses. No better proof of their high moral condition could be wished for than the fact that, despite many cases of poverty and want which exist among them, 'there is not a locked or barred door at night, even during the hours of sleep, from one end of the settlement to the other.'

What, then, has disturbed so fair a prospect, and threatened to abandon to warfare a territory in which peace, with all its blessings, has so long prevailed? To answer this question completely it would be necessary to review the events of the last twenty years, during which period the people of Red River have made many unsuccessful attempts to obtain the rights of British subjects. The English, the Scotch, the French elements in that population believed they were entitled to enjoy privileges similar to those which are happily exercised by their fellow-citizens in Canada. They memorialized the Crown, they petitioned the House of Commons, their indefatigable representative in England (Mr. Isbister) made unceasing efforts on their behalf; but all in vain. The Hudson's Bay Company stood in the way, and successfully held its own against the combined opposition of the most experienced statesmen in the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, although the country was repeatedly explored by scientific expeditions sent out from Canada, and although the reports made by Professor Hind, Captain Palliser, Mr. Dawson, and others (and which have since been confirmed by travellers like Lord Milton and Dr. Cheadle) afforded indubitable proof of the fertility of the valley of the Saskatchewan, and of its ability to provide for the settlement of a population of at least thirty millions, nothing was done—no real attempt was made either to connect the Red River Settlement with Canada, or to give effect to the recommendations of the Select Committee of 1857, which were, in substance, that no time should be lost in making equitable arrangements with the Hudson's Bay Company for the cession to Canada of the districts of the Red River and the Saskatchewan.

During the long interval which has since occurred, the only outlet for the produce of Red River has been by way of Pembina—the only practicable communication with the outer world has been through American territory; and I only repeat a well-known fact, when I state, that so long ago as the period of Mr. Buchanan's nomination for the Presidency, the British settlers at Red River were invited to send delegates to the Democratic Convention in Minnesota. The only wonder is, that, amid so many discouragements, they retained their feelings of loyalty to the British Crown, and continued to buoy themselves up with the hope that one day their just rights would be respected.

It is quite true that the present rebellion has broken out at a time

when apparently these rights were about to receive a satisfactory, although a tardy recognition. But, in view of recent events, the fact cannot be ignored, that, while the responsibility of those acts of violence which have driven Mr. McDougall back to Canada chiefly attaches to the French Canadians, yet that the whole population is more or less disaffected. It is well that Mr. McDougall failed in his alleged attempt—I can only hope that in this particular his conduct has been misrepresented—to organize the Swamp Indians into a military force powerful enough to enable him to effect an entrance into the country, for the only result of so ill-advised a proceeding would have been to light the flames of an Indian war.

What, then, is the cause of the generally disaffected state of the population? The answer to this inquiry must be looked for partly in the well-intentioned but inadequate policy of the Imperial Government, and partly in the conduct of the Government of Canada. When it became apparent that important changes were pending, the Indians were made uneasy by injurious rumours to the effect that their lands would be taken from them. It is to the honour of Canada that she has always recognised the Indian title, and that by extinguishing it on equitable terms she has not only been spared the calamities of an Indian war, but has always found in the red man a loyal ally in times of invasion. Still it could not be expected that Crees and Blackfeet, Algonquins and Assiniboines, would make themselves acquainted with the Canadian mode of dealing with tribes similar to their own, or that they would be sensible of anything save the danger arising from the probable intrusion into their country of large numbers of adventurers, who might or might not be influenced by that sense of justice which is, unfortunately, but too little understood in the unsettled or sparsely-peopled countries of the world. Be this as it may, the existence of this disquieting element is an undoubted fact. As was pointed out by Mr. Isbister in his letter to Mr. R. N. Fowler, M.P. (*Vide The Times'* report of the debate in the House of Commons on the 1st of June last), the uneasiness of the Indians could only be effectually overcome by a Royal Proclamation, analogous to the one which was issued in the year 1763, when Canada was annexed to Great Britain. This proclamation placed the rights of the Indian tribes on a proper footing, and from that day to this no Canadian Government has seriously departed from the cardinal principles of justice there laid down by the wisdom of our ancestors.

But the civilized inhabitants of the Red River Settlement, who are as competent to manage their own affairs as any portion of Her Majesty's subjects, have peculiar grievances of their own. I pass over the dubious conduct of certain Canadian officials, who, it is alleged, attempted to buy land from people who had no right to sell, and who, in other quarters, began too soon to play the part of surveyors and land-agents. I pass over these things, because

the primary grounds of complaint on the part of the Red River people are two-fold; first, that their country has been transferred to Canada without their being consulted in the transaction; and secondly, that the Dominion has endeavoured to establish a Government which could not command the confidence of the people. Certainly, it only seems reasonable that when the Imperial Government offered to hand over the Hudson's Bay Territories to Canada, some attempt should have been made to ascertain the real feelings of the people. There can be no doubt that in the course it has pursued the Government of Canada has been influenced by good intentions; but good intentions are often frustrated by injudicious acts, and in deciding to appoint a nominated council at Red River, consisting of eight members, only two of whom were to be selected from the country itself, Sir George Cartier and his colleagues virtually announced their intention to withhold from the people those representative institutions which the latter deemed absolutely necessary for their security and progress.

These are, I believe, the simple facts of the matter, and a dispassionate statement of them may serve to point out a policy of wise concession, which, if tried, would bring the present troubles to a peaceful and honourable termination.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

F. W. CHESSEX,

Secretary of the Aborigines' Protection Society.

7, Adam Street, Adelphi, Jan. 11.

LETTER II.

To the Editor of the Examiner.

SIR,—So much misconception exists in the public mind as to the origin of the Red River insurrection and the objects of its leaders, that I venture to submit to your readers a statement of facts which I believe to be irrefutable. I would premise that my information as to the events themselves is derived, not from the contradictory and perplexing reports of the American and Colonial journals, in which it is almost impossible to separate fact from fiction, but from English people long resident in the colony who have taken no part in the insurrection, and who, until a recent period, have been warm partisans of Canada.

As a body the English and Scotch inhabitants of the Red River settlement have held aloof from the insurgents; but while refusing to take up arms against Canada, they have been equally resolute in their determination to leave the Canadians to fight their own battles. When Colonel Dennis called upon the British portion of the settlers to rally round Mr. McDougall, the Lieutenant-Governor despatched from Ottawa to the Red River, the invitation was only responded to by a mere handful of the persons so addressed

—the fact being that the moral sympathies of the entire settlement are enlisted on the side of the French half-breeds.

Separate action on the part of the different nationalities which are represented in the country is facilitated by the geographical nature of their distribution along the banks of the Red River and the Assiniboine.

The former river, after passing Pembina on the American boundary line, flows in a northerly direction for upwards of a hundred miles, and finally empties itself into Lake Winnipeg. The stretch of country between Pembina and what is called the Upper Fort, or Fort Garry, is settled exclusively by descendants of French *voyageurs*, the most ancient occupiers of the country. At Fort Garry the Assiniboine mingles its waters with the parent stream: and the land on either side of this affluent of the Red River is settled by a mixed community of English and French. Returning to the Red River, the Scotch settlers first, and higher up a body of the English, are located in the tract extending from the Upper to the Lower Fort; while between the latter point and Lake Winnipeg the country is inhabited partly by English half-breeds and partly by a settlement of Christianized Indians. From this explanation it will appear that the French population is in immediate contact with the Minnesota frontier. This may account for the alleged American proclivities of some of them, although at present there is no reliable evidence tending to show that they have, as a community, any desire to connect themselves politically with the great American Republic. It is equally certain that the Americans have had no hand in instigating the insurrection; and, in fact, the rising is attributable to causes for which the Imperial Government and the Dominion of Canada are mainly responsible. Moreover, the red men are to a man strong in their loyalty to England.

There is an Indian difficulty looming in the future; for the Indians entertain a feeling of uneasiness as to the security of their tenure in the land. Thus far, however, they have taken no part in the movement. It is true that when, in the first week in December, there was reason to apprehend that the French would attack the Lower Fort, the Chief there sent out tobacco (the Indian war summons), and a large number of the tribe responded to the call; but only a hundred of them were allowed to remain, and these only for purposes of defence. Active disaffection is, therefore, confined to the half-breeds (I am compelled to use this phrase, although, as applied to a civilized and highly intelligent community, it is a somewhat misleading one), whose grievances are of a purely political character, and such as have often existed in other Colonies. In this connection it is worthy of remark that although John Bruce, the leader of the rebellion, is a half-breed, Louis Riel, the insurgent Commander-in-Chief, is a pure French Canadian, who formerly resided in the province of Quebec, and has only recently established himself at the Red River Settlement. The question, in fact, is a Colonial and not an aboriginal one.

I now wish your readers fairly to consider whether these people have not a just ground of complaint. When the negotiations for the transfer of the Hudson's Bay territories were on the eve of being brought to a termination, they not unnaturally expected that Canada would send agents to the Red River to ascertain the state of the country and the feeling of the inhabitants. Instead of this, their first knowledge of the fact that their country, and the people in it, had been sold to Canada for three hundred thousand pounds, was derived from the newspapers; and their first practical insight into the working of the new system was afforded by a party of officials who commenced to survey the land before it had been formally decided that the Hudson's Bay Company would actually relinquish possession. The overbearing conduct of some of these persons irritated and alarmed an already distrustful people; and when Mr. McDougall, at the head of another *posse* of officials (not one of whom was connected with the country), arrived at Pembina, the passions thus generated became absolutely uncontrollable. Nor were the disaffected without excuses of a much graver nature than those which originated in the ill-advised language and proceedings of the subordinate agents employed by Canada.

The Canadian Government did not attempt to conceal from the Red River people the fact that they not only intended at once to govern them by a nominated Council, but that self-governing institutions would be withheld from the country for four or five years, or until the population had reached an aggregate of fifty thousand. Not until then were they to be permitted to enjoy a local Legislature, or to send representatives to the Confederate Parliament; and the anticipation was openly avowed, that by that time the country would be flooded with Canadians and the native element crushed out. These facts indubitably show how grievous has been the mismanagement for which somebody is responsible. That somebody entirely forgot that the people with whom it was thus proposed to deal have virtually governed themselves for a long series of years, and that therefore the measures proposed were essentially reactionary. If the Reform party in Ontario had been in power, these mistakes would never have been made.

It has been assumed that the insurgents by proclaiming their independence have virtually announced their intention to shake off their allegiance to the British Crown. I believe, on the contrary, that they mean independence only as respects their connection with Canada, and not separation from the empire. On the 1st of December the disaffected party, both French and British, held a meeting at which, without a single dissident, they agreed to make certain demands, the concession of which should be followed by the recognition of Mr. McDougall's authority as Lieutenant-Governor. The basis of all these demands was the right of the people to a local Legislature. The French were willing there and then to appoint two English and two French delegates to proceed to Pembina for the purpose of making these proposals to Mr. McDougall;

but the English held back because their colleagues insisted, as a preliminary to peace, that the rights they claimed should be embodied in an Act of Parliament. In the meanwhile, there arrived from Colonel Dennis a message invoking the armed assistance of the British party against their French countrymen, with whom they are bound by so many ties of blood and sympathy; and this effectually extinguished those pacific counsels which had begun to prevail. I mention these facts to show that disloyalty to England does not lie at the root of these difficulties, and that if the Imperial Government does its duty, it may restore order on the basis of justice.

The Canadians have despatched an embassy to Pembina, to make another effort to talk over the insurgents; but the feeling against them is at present so strong that the attempt will probably fail. In this case the wisest course for the Government here to pursue would be to send out a governor from England. This is, I know, what the best people in the settlement are praying for; and although such a step would necessarily delay, for some time to come, the carrying out of the arrangements recently concluded with Canada, it would be better calculated than any other expedient which could be devised to ensure the ultimate extension of the authority of the Dominion over the great north-west territory.

7, Adam Street, Adelphi,
Jan. 19, 1870.

I am, &c.,
F. W. CHESSON.

LETTER III.

To the Editor of the Standard.

SIR,—The telegrams recently received from America relative to the Red-River difficulty, and the comments of some of your contemporaries upon them, are, I am afraid, leading to some erroneous views respecting the real nature and objects of the so-called "rebellion" in that distant territory. I do not wish for one moment to disguise the very serious aspect which the question is assuming, but, whatever the difficulty may be, our duty is to look it fairly in the face, and with this view our first step must be to ascertain clearly what are the causes which have led to this unexpected and most deplorable complication.

Although some years ago the medium of communication, as a barrister resident in London, between certain of the inhabitants of the Red-River Settlement and the Colonial Office relative to some disputes between them and the Hudson's-Bay Company, I must disclaim the character of a "representative" of the colonists in their present dissensions with Canada, the first intimation of which came to me, as it has done to others in this country, through the newspapers. Upon the statements which have appeared in the New York and Canadian papers, I place but little reliance, as they

come to us coloured by the views either of undisguised sympathisers with the insurgents, as I fear most persons in the United States are, or of Canadian politicians bitterly resenting the unexpected obstacles they have met with in carrying out the schemes which have brought them to the Red-River country. Information I have just received direct from the Settlement, and coming down to the middle of December, fully three weeks subsequent to the "Declaration of Independence" of the 24th of November, from persons who, though long resident in the colony, have taken no part in the present troubles, satisfies me that the real history of the "Red-River Rebellion" is not yet before us.

The present outbreak is generally represented in Canada as originating with the French "half-breed" population, who it is alleged have established a reign of terror in the Settlement, under which the English or loyal portion of the inhabitants have been unable to make their wishes known. This is partly right and partly wrong. The population, according to the last census which has come under my notice, is pretty nearly equally divided between the English and French-speaking classes, the preponderance of property, education, and influence being rather on the side of the English than the French. The leader of the movement, Louis Riel, is a Frenchman, *pur sang*, and I am afraid there can be little doubt that he has with him in his present contest with Canada the sympathy, if not the actual co-operation, of nine-tenths of the whole population, both native and European. It is quite true, however, that the vast majority of the insurgents, who have actually taken up arms, consists of what are called French "half-breeds," and as their views will eventually probably give colour and form to the whole movement, it is important that we should ascertain clearly what these views really are.

It is going a long way back to talk of the period antecedent to the conquest of Canada, but we cannot understand the position taken by the insurgents in the present *imbroglio* without it. Long before the Hudson's-Bay Company had ever heard of the names of the Red River and the Saskatchewan, French traders from Canada had found their way to this remote region, and established trading posts as far north as the banks of the last-named stream. Cut off from communication with the settled parts of Canada by the sudden outbreak of hostilities which ended in its conquest by the British in 1763, these traders settled down contentedly among the Indians, and here their descendants were found when, some twenty or thirty years afterwards, the early pioneers of the North-West Company of Montreal re-established a trade with the Indians in these parts, with the old result of many of their French *employés* remaining in the country in which they had passed the best part of their lives, with their native wives and families. An unbroken descent on the fathers' side from the first European occupiers of the country, and on the mothers' from the native proprietors of the soil, has given the French half-breed population at Red River,

where most of them have gradually collected, a species of claim to leadership in resisting any aggression upon what they consider their right to a voice in the settlement of so important a question as the constitution of the new government which is to succeed that of the Hudson's-Bay Company, and under which they and their children are hereafter to live. Hence their present attitude in regard to Canada, whose pretensions to govern them by means of a ready-made council sent up from Ottawa, without giving them any representation in the Dominion Parliament, degrading them into the position, as they express it, of "a colony of a colony," they are resolved to resist to the last extremity. They claim the right—as Prince Edward's Island, Newfoundland and British Columbia have the right—of entering the "Confederation," not when Canada chooses, but when they choose themselves, and on their own terms. Their much-talked of "Declaration of Independence" is, in reality, a declaration against Canada, and not against the Imperial Government, which they consider has abandoned them, treated the memorials and petitions they have sent to England with contempt, and left them to fight their battle with Canada as best they can. When reminded that the Dominion Government has paid, or undertaken to pay, 300,000*l.* for the country to the Hudson's-Bay Company, and cannot be expected to allow it to be governed by the small community at Red River in their own interest, their answer is, that in selling the Red River and the Saskatchewan, the Company have sold what was not theirs to sell; and, even if it were, their right as British subjects to be taxed only by their own representatives is a matter which cannot be made the subject of bargain and sale by any government or governments whatsoever. Whatever may be the right of the Company to the shores of Hudson's Bay, their claim to the Red River and the Saskatchewan has, they contend, to be proved, inasmuch as at the date of the charter of King Charles II. these countries were in the undisturbed possession of their French ancestors, and the Charter expressly, and in terms, excludes from the operation of the grant all lands and territories which may at the time be "in the possession of any Christian power or state."

This is the position—whether right or wrong—which the people of Red River have taken up, and which they have resolved to maintain by force of arms. It is useless to conceal from ourselves that the question is becoming one of the most serious character. The danger of the present movement arises not so much from the numbers or strength of the insurgents as their complete inaccessibility, and still more from the undisguised sympathy and the material aid they will be certain to receive from thousands of persons in the United States, who are the irreconcilable enemies of this country, and who, as you very justly remark in your issue of Saturday, will rejoice at any movement which seems to promise a disintegration of that British-American empire of which we have laid the foundation in the Canadian Confederation. The

question arises, what is to be done? We cannot sit still with folded hands till the arrival of spring, when thousands of Fenians will be streaming over the frontier and dragging Riel and his followers from their present attitude of passive resistance to Canada into one of active aggression against the British possessions in America, wherever they are most assailable, beginning in all probability with British Columbia, which it would be easy to assail from the side of Red River, so as completely to isolate it from all communication with Canada. We shall hear in a few days of the result of the mission of Messrs. Thibault, Desalaberry, and Smith, who have, as a last resource, been sent by the Canadian Government to hold a conference with the insurgents at Pembina. The failure of this mission will throw the whole question back once more upon the Colonial Office, and Lord Granville should therefore be prepared, without a day's delay, to send, if need be, a representative of the Queen to Red River, who, setting aside both Canada and the Hudson's-Bay Company, should hold the country and administer it in Her Majesty's name, with the aid of a local council chosen from the settlers; and, if it should be thought advisable, pave the way for the transfer of the country to Canada at a future period, when the present ferment has subsided, and time has been given to arrange for its entering the Confederation on conditions acceptable to all the parties concerned.

I am, &c.,

Temple, January 18th.

A. K. ISBISTER.

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS.

THE views expressed in the foregoing letters are supported by articles and correspondence which have appeared in several of the leading journals of Canada. The *Toronto Globe*, in its issue of the 31st of December 1869, says, that "the original fundamental error of the Government lay in ignoring altogether the opinions and feelings of the inhabitants of the Selkirk Settlement. . . . In spite of the warnings of the Opposition in the House of Commons and of this journal, they refused to introduce at once a representative system of government, and left the control of affairs of the Territory for an indefinite period to a Governor and Council." From the same article we learn that Mr. McDougall owed his appointment to his unpopularity with his colleagues; that he was unacceptable to the French population at Red River, in consequence of "an old quarrel about the Manitoulin Islands;" and that "while Mr. McDougall was issuing his proclamation of the annexation of the territory to Canada the Government had put a stop to the annexation altogether—they had prevented the payment of the money in England, and indefinitely postponed the issue of the Queen's proclamation." On a review of all the facts the *Globe* arrives at the con-

clusion that "the Ottawa Government were the first to do wrong, and ought to be the first to acknowledge it and to make restitution."

The grounds of disaffection on the part of the Red-River people are stated by a correspondent of the same journal, who is said to be an official of the Hudson's-Bay Company. Writing from Winnipeg on the 10th of November 1869, he says:

That which has been foretold for some time past in this settlement has taken place. The discontent that has been brewing amongst a large number of our settlers towards the new order of Government proposed for them has at last culminated in an open and decided resistance by the French half-breeds in preventing Mr. McDougall and his Council from entering the North-West Territory. It is quite apparent to intelligent people here, as it will be generally admitted in Canada when all the facts are known, that the Government at Ottawa have made a serious mistake in the outset of their assuming the rule over the North West, and only ignorance of the country and the people, if the wise heads at the head of affairs will allow it, can be the plea in their self-defence. Can it be that Sir John A. Macdonald and Cartier were aware that there were about 14,000 of a population here who would justly consider it their right to be, at least, acquainted with the steps the new Government proposed taking with regard to their future welfare, and that they in the face of this knowledge have insisted upon throwing in their deputies on the pretext that "We have bought your country—we have paid so much money for the purchase—we expect to spend so much more on improvements—we of course did not exactly buy you as a people, but, unfortunately for you, you happened to be born there, and therefore you must just grin and bear with what we intend to do."

The correspondent then asks whether it would not have been a wise policy for the Government to have sent up authorised Agents to the Red-River as soon as the transfer of the territory was agreed upon, for the purpose of feeling the pulse of the settlers, finding out their ideas on the change proposed, and opening out, as far as possible, the views of the Canadian Government towards them. He affirms that, if this course had been taken, Mr. McDougall, instead of finding obstructions at Fort Garry, would have been welcomed by crowds of the people. Other causes of complaint are thus described:

Our settlement was suddenly devastated, by means of a plague, in the shape of the grasshoppers. It is needless here to give the already oft-repeated tale of how our crops were utterly destroyed; how the buffalo disappeared; the fish failed; in fact, how utterly we were besieged by famine. England came to our aid; the United States assisted us; private contributions from Canada flowed in upon us; and the Hudson's-Bay Company did more than all the others put together. At this time the Government in Ottawa, no doubt, for praiseworthy reasons, sent in a party to commence the road to the Lake of the Woods; the idea being to pay for their labour in provisions those from amongst the settlers who were willing to work The two parties sent in charge of this end of the Government road may have acted wisely, but not too well. They employed a certain number of men from amongst the settlers, and when flour was selling at three pounds sterling per barrel in the stores, they charged the poor men, their employés, three pounds twelve shillings,

and four pounds sterling, per barrel, and, at the same time, only paid them three pounds per month in that ratio for their work—this created dissatisfaction. The next thing, which caused still more discontent amongst the people, was a concerted plan of a few, in which the Government officials in charge of the road were implicated, to buy up from Indians (who had no right to sell) parcels of land, on part of which people were actually living, in and around Oak Point, the head-quarters of the Government works. This raised such a feeling of indignation against the parties concerned, that the head men in charge of the road summarily received notice from the neighbours around to quit the premises forthwith; and, afterwards, one of the principal actors in the affair (a Government official) was fined by one petty court ten pounds sterling for giving liquor to those same Indians. On the top of all these unfortunate occurrences, in comes Colonel Dennis, with his party of surveyors, to divide and sub-divide the land into sections as they saw fit. This, at all events, was premature on the part of the rulers at Ottawa, before any arrangements had been made with the people here regarding the incoming Government. And, although Colonel Dennis acted in a gentlemanly and proper manner in the discharge of his troublesome duties, still the people looked on the act of his party going to work before the establishment of the new order of rule, as arbitrary and presumptuous.

It also appears from the statements made by this gentleman—and the report is confirmed in other quarters—that Mr. McTavish, the present Governor of the settlement, under the Hudson's Bay Company, received from the Canadian Government no official intimation of the fact that Mr. McDougall had been appointed to supersede him. "Justitia" then gives the following narrative of the earlier occurrences in the insurrection:—

One portion of the settlers (the French) avowed their intention of preventing Mr. McDougall from entering the settlement, and, in support of this determination, they erected barriers across the roads leading to Fort Garry. Scouts were posted all along from the Assiniboine to Pembina, a distance of over sixty miles, to give notice of Mr. McDougall's approach. The number of men under arms at one time must have been upwards of six hundred, and this large number was not assembled merely for the purpose of turning back one man and his few friends, but it was done to show the universal opinion of the French half-breeds regarding the question at issue. Many of the French did not take part in this armed protest, but offered their services as soon as they should be required. The English-speaking portion of the settlement, in the meantime, quietly remained in the background, nor were attempts to raise them against the French, and in favour of McDougall, found successful. They had no interest in opposing their neighbours, with whom they had lived so long in amity; especially in support of a cause that intended, apparently, to reduce their rights as British subjects to nothing; in fact, when the thing was canvassed, which was done by the friends of Mr. McDougall, there could not be found fifty men amongst the settlers themselves to offer their assistance in bringing the new Governor as far as Fort Garry. Several ideas were afloat as to the propriety of keeping Mr. McDougall out, but the general opinion seemed to be—we have not been justly dealt by, and we will not at all events oppose those who are fighting our battles to bring in a government that has, as yet, given us no assurance nor sample of their fair dealing. The universal cry was—we have been overlooked in this matter; and if Mr. McDougall should

come in and attempt to force on us a measure distasteful to the community, we will then join in open resistance against him. I give this as the voice of our people. It may not be palatable to Mr. McDougall and his cliqué, but it is a true version nevertheless. The Council of Red River, in the meantime, had several meetings, and their ultimate decision and advice to Mr. McDougall, and which was forwarded to him in the shape of a letter from the Council, was, that it would be better for him, in the existing state of the country, for his own peace and safety, and for the public welfare, to remain at Pembina, and not endeavour to force himself into the settlement, especially as it was found that there were so few favourably inclined towards him. On Mr. McDougall's arrival in Pembina he accepted the situation, and decided on remaining there for the present, but Messrs. Provencher and Cameron thought to press through to Fort Garry. It was a useless attempt on their part, as they were stopped within nine miles of the Fort, and escorted back to Pembina by an escort of twenty-five or thirty armed men. Provencher spent a number of hours amongst the rebels, as they are called by the *Nor'-Wester*, and, if report speaks true, he had no reason to cavil at their treatment of him. Cameron, however, had no opportunity to parley with them, but was immediately turned back the way he came. The escort of Messrs. Provencher and Cameron had orders to see Mr. McDougall and party across the lines, and at this present moment our would-be Governor is quietly resting on his oars in Uncle Sam's dominions.

On the 16th of November the Council of Delegates, consisting of twelve representatives of the French and twelve of the English population, held its first meeting, but without any definite result. In fact, on the 22nd of November, after three meetings had been held, the Council was temporarily dissolved:—

At the meeting the question of Mr. McDougall was laid on one side, and the advantages and disadvantages of annexation to Canada discussed. All seemed satisfied that our only course was to go into the dominion with the rights of British subjects, and the tariff and other regulations of Canada modified to meet the peculiar circumstances of our country. But when the French announced that they wished the English to form with them a Provincial Government to upset the Hudson's-Bay Company's rule (which they asserted was dead already), the meeting broke up, the English delegates agreeing, however, to put their proposition before their several parishes and to return an answer on Wednesday week. Things were beginning to become exceedingly complicated and apparently diverging from the original idea of merely asking rights from Canada. The present rule of the country was threatened and private interests interfered with; and these facts made people view matters with a great deal of disquietude. A guard of men was sent to Pembina to watch the proceedings of Mr. McDougall. At the same time permission was asked from Governor MacTavish by the residents around Lower Fort Garry to put a force of 100 to 150 men in it, in case of trouble between the two sides of the Settlement. The general opinion of the English side was against forming a Provisional Government in the face of the Hudson's-Bay Company's rule; and feeling began to run so high on the subject that guns and rifles were raked together and distributed amongst all those able to carry them. A general rush was made for lead; and bullets were moulded by the thousands. Companies of men were formed for drill here and there throughout the Settlement,

and the utmost excitement prevailed. The warlike preparations were gone into merely in readiness to meet any trouble that might come. Indeed, the slightest provocation on either side resulting in the shedding of a single drop of blood would have cast our Settlement into a civil war, the end of which would have been deplorable.

Passing over a number of minor events we now arrive at the meeting of the French and English delegates, which was held at Fort Garry on the 1st of December. The French then submitted the following "Bill of Rights:"—

1. That the people have the right to elect their own Legislature.
2. That the Legislature have the power to pass all laws local to the Territory over the veto of the Executive by a two-thirds vote.
3. That no Act of the Dominion Parliament (local to the Territory) be binding on the people until sanctioned by the Legislature of the Territory.
4. That all Sheriffs, Magistrates, Constables, School Commissioners, &c., be elected by the people.
5. A free homestead and pre-emption land law.
6. That a portion of the public lands be appropriated to the benefit of schools, the building of bridges, roads, and public buildings.
7. That it be guaranteed to connect Winnipeg by rail with the nearest line of railroad, within a term of five years; the land grant to be subject to the Local Legislature.
8. That for the term of four years all military, civil and municipal expenses be paid out of the Dominion funds.
9. That the military be composed of the inhabitants now existing in the Territory.
10. That the English and French languages be common in the Legislature and Courts, and that all public documents and Acts of the Legislature be published in both languages.
11. That the Judge of the Supreme Court speak the English and French languages.
12. That Treaties be concluded and ratified between the Dominion Government and the several tribes of Indians in the Territory, to ensure peace on the frontier.
13. That we have a fair and full representation in the Canadian Parliament.
14. That all privileges, customs and usages existing at the time of the transfer be respected.

All the above articles have been severally discussed and adopted by the French and English Representatives without a dissenting voice, as the conditions upon which the people of Rupert's Land enter into Confederation. The French Representatives then proposed, in order to secure the above rights, that a Delegation be appointed and sent to Pembina, to see Mr. McDougall, and ask him if he could guarantee these rights by virtue of his commission; and, if he could do so, that then the French people would join to a man to escort Mr. McDougall into his Government seat. But, on the contrary, if Mr. McDougall could not guarantee such rights, that the Delegates request him to remain where he is, or return, till the rights be guaranteed by Act of the Canadian Parliament. The English Representatives refused to appoint Delegates to go to Pembina to consult with Mr. McDougall, stating, they had no authority to do so from their constituents, upon which the Council was dissolved.

This meeting was undoubtedly the turning-point of the insurrection. The foregoing extract is calculated to produce the impression that the English settlers played a hesitating, if not a dubious part at a very critical moment. That this was not so will be seen from a fuller report in the proceedings of the Convention, which has been supplied by a correspondent of the *Montreal Herald*.

On the forenoon of 1st December the delegates again met according to appointment, and it was whispered that, from intelligence received by mail on the preceding day, it was known that something of consequence would transpire in the course of the day. In the afternoon it was known that Col. Dennis had arrived from Pembina, bringing with him the Royal Proclamation, which was forthwith published, and was to take effect from that day. It was distributed in written form, it being impossible to put it in type, as both the printing establishments now here had previously been seized by the insurgents.

Colonel Dennis, it appeared, had arrived by a somewhat roundabout way, selected so as to avoid the obstructions at La Riviere Sale, on the evening of 30th November. His journey was a brave undertaking, as he certainly ran a narrow risk of his life, being already regarded with an evil eye by the insurgents, in consequence of having passed their lines in a similar manner, on his journey to meet Mr. McDougall at Pembina. His exertions at the latter place, in rendering the position of the Lieutenant-Governor as tolerable as possible, are also very highly spoken of, and will doubtless be appreciated at their proper value in official quarters.

Louis Riel and his Council were served with a copy of the Proclamation on Wednesday afternoon. The English members who attended had already become convinced of the practical impossibility of concurring with the French in any project such as that of a "Provisional Government," and had determined on withdrawing from the movement. An evening session was, however, agreed to, and after a recess of two hours the assembly met at six o'clock, and continued in session till a late hour. The course of the proceedings with which the delegates were occupied is only slightly known to outsiders. I believe, however, that a series of proposals, to be made to Mr. McDougall, was drawn up, and at least tacitly agreed to by a majority of the English delegates. When the question arose, however, as to which of the latter should represent their party in a commission to be forwarded to Pembina to meet Mr. McDougall, and lay the terms of compromise before him, the whole English party declined to go. Their reluctance is scarcely surprising if it be true, as reported, that one of the requisitions was that Mr. McDougall should give the deputation an "Act of Parliament" to assure them of his good faith in the matter, which would be more than doubtful were he to refuse so straightforward and simple a guarantee. I think, however, the project of English co-operation with the French is at an end, and the deputies have gone home. The French deputies, however, remain together, and the party is growing stronger than ever.

o A rumour that Colonel Dennis, who was at the Lower Fort, intended to attack Fort Garry, produced a bad impression.

The rumour, however, turned out to be a false alarm; but the injury was done, the French being now determined, in a body, to keep Mr. McDougall out of the settlement until the rights claimed were fully secured to them. It appears that a party of about thirty Canadians or over, resident in the town, drove down during the night to the Stone Fort, and offered their service to Colonel Dennis; he, it seems, enrolled them, but sent them back to the town with instructions to remain quiet until called upon. It was the return of these men that gave rise to the rumour that an attacking force was on its way against Fort Garry. False rumours have done a great deal of harm in exciting the people and keeping up the present difficulty.

Matters became further complicated by the capture of a number of these Canadians, who had been collected by Dr. Schultz, a well known partisan of Mr. McDougall, for the defence of his house and property, but who, it was erroneously supposed by the French, were intended to form a nucleus for a future attack on Fort Garry. The capture, as well as the subsequent imprisonment, of these Canadians was due to a proclamation which was issued by Colonel Dennis :—

THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES.

[L S]

By His Excellency the Honourable William McDougall, a Minister of our Privy Council for Canada, and Companion of our most Honourable Order of the Bath, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories.

To JOHN STOUGHTON DENNIS, Esq., Lieutenant Colonel Military Staff, Canada, Greeting.

Whereas large bodies of armed men have unlawfully assembled on the high road between Fort Garry and Pembina, in the Colony or District of Assiniboia, and have, with force of arms, arrested and held as prisoners numerous private and official persons, and prevented them from proceeding on their lawful journey and business, and have committed other acts of lawless violence, in contempt and defiance of the magistrates and local authorities;

And whereas Wm. McTavish, Esq., Governor of Assiniboia, did on the sixteenth day of November last publish and make known to those armed men and all others whom it might concern, that the lawless acts aforesaid, and which were particularly set forth in his proclamation, were "contrary to the remonstrances and protests of the public authorities," and did therein himself protest against and all of the said unlawful acts and intents, and charged and commanded the said armed persons to immediately disperse themselves and peaceably to depart to their habitations or lawful business under the pains and penalties of the law;

And whereas, since the issue of the said protest or proclamation, certain of the armed men aforesaid have taken possession of the public records and papers at Fort Garry, and have seized and held as prisoners public officers or persons having charge of the same, and as I am credibly informed, still keep unlawful possession of the said records and public property, and with force of arms continue to obstruct public officers and others in the performance of their lawful duty and business, to the great terror, loss and injury of Her Majesty's peaceable subjects, and in contempt of Her Royal authority;

And whereas, Her Majesty, by Letters Patent under the Great Seal of the Dominion of Canada, bearing date the twenty-ninth day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine, has been graciously pleased to appoint me to be, from and after the first day of December instant, Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories, and did thereby authorize and command me to do and execute all things in due manner that should belong to my said command.

Know You, that reposing trust and confidence in your courage, loyalty, fidelity, discretion and ability, and under and by virtue of the authority in me vested, I have nominated and appointed, and by these presents do nominate and appoint you, the said John Stoughton Dennis, to be my Lieutenant and a Conservator of the Peace in and for the North-West Territories, and as such to raise, organize, arm, equip and provision, a

sufficient force within the said Territories, and with the said force, to attack, arrest, disarm or disperse the said armed men so unlawfully assembled and disturbing the public peace, and for that purpose and with the force aforesaid, to assault, fire upon, pull down, or break into any fort, house, stronghold, or other place in which the said armed men may be found, and I hereby authorize you as such Lieutenant and Conservator of the Peace, to hire, purchase, impress and take all necessary clothing, arms, ammunition and supplies, and all cattle, horses, waggons, sleighs or other vehicles which may be required for the use of the force to be raised as aforesaid; and I further authorize you to appoint as many officers and deputies under you, and to give them such orders and instructions, from time to time, as may be found necessary for the due performance of the services herein required of you, reporting to me the said appointments, and orders as you shall find opportunity for confirmation, or otherwise; and I hereby give you full power and authority to call upon all magistrates and peace officers to aid and assist you, and to order all or any of the inhabitants of the said North-West Territories, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, to support and assist you in protecting the lives and property of Her Majesty's loyal subjects, and in preserving the public peace, and for that purpose, to take, disperse, or overcome by force, the said armed men, and all others who may be found aiding or abetting them in their unlawful acts.

And the said persons so called upon in Her Majesty's name, are hereby ordered and enjoined, at their peril, to obey your orders and directions in that behalf; and this shall be sufficient warrant for what you or they may do in the premises, so long as this commission remains in force.

Given under my hand and seal at arms, at Red River, in the said Territories, on this the first day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine, and in the thirty-third year of our reign.

(Signed)

WILLIAM McDougall

By command.

(Signed)

J. A. N. PROVENCHER,

Secretary.

By virtue of the above commission from the Lieutenant-Governor, I now hereby call on and order all loyal men of the North-West Territories, to assist me by every means in their power, to carry out the same, and thereby restore public peace and order, and uphold the supremacy of the Queen in this part of Her Majesty's dominions.

Given under my hand, at the Stone Fort, Lower Settlement, this 6th day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine.

(Signed) J. S. DENNIS,

Lieutenant and Conservator of the Peace
in and for the North-West Territories.

This proclamation not only failed in its object, but the language employed greatly increased the general irritation, while, as Colonel Dennis was entirely without the means of giving effect to the hostile orders which he had received, he was placed in a position as ridiculous as it was embarrassing.

It will be observed that this formidable document was dated the 6th of December. Three days afterwards—when it was too late—when, in fact, the imputation rested on the Canadian party of

having attempted to resort to coercion, and signally failed—the following pacific Proclamation was issued by Colonel Dennis.

Lower Fort Garry, Red River Settlement,
December 9, 1869.

To All Whom it may concern,

By certain printed papers of late put in circulation by the French party, communication with the Lieutenant Governor is indicated with a view to laying before him alleged rights on the part of those now in arms.

I think that course very desirable, and that it would lead to good results.

Under the belief that the party in arms are sincere in their desire for peace, and feeling that to abandon for the present the call on the loyal to arms would, in view of such communications, relieve the situation of much embarrassment, and so contribute to bring about peace and save the country from what will otherwise end in ruin and desolation; I now call on and order the loyal party in the North-West Territories to cease further action under the appeal to arms made by me; and I call on the French party to satisfy the people of their sincerity in wishing for a peaceful ending of all these troubles by sending a deputation to the Lieutenant-Governor at Pembina without unnecessary delay.

Given under my hand at the Lower Fort Garry
this 9th day of December, 1869.

(Signed) J. L. DENNIS,

Lieutenant and Conservator of the Peace
in and for the North-West Territories.

This proclamation was quickly followed by other arrests, and by the departure of Colonel Dennis from the country.

The day before, however—that is, on the 8th of December—the French issued their Proclamation, which, it will be observed, had been agreed to a fortnight previously:—

“Whereas it is admitted by all men as a fundamental principle that the public authority commands the obedience and respect of all its subjects, it is also admitted that the people to be governed have the right to adopt or reject the form of Government, or refuse allegiance to that which is proposed. In accordance with these fundamental principles, the people of this country have obeyed and respected that authority to which the circumstances surrounding its infancy compelled it to be subjected. A company of adventurers known as the Hudson-Bay Company, and invested with certain powers granted by His Majesty Charles II., established itself in Rupert's Land and in the North-West Territory, for trading purposes only. This company consisted of many persons, requiring a certain constitution; but, as there was a question of commerce only, the constitution was formed in reference thereto; and yet, since there was at that time no Government to see to the interests of a people already existing in the country, it became necessary for judicial officers to have recourse to the officers of the Hudson-Bay Company. They inaugurated that species of Government which, slightly modified by subsequent circumstances, ruled this country up to a recent date. Whereas, the Government thus created was far from answering the wants of the people, and became more and more so as the population increased in numbers, and as the country was developed commerce extended, until

the present day, when it commands a place among the countries; and this people, ever actuated by the above-mentioned principles, have generously supported the aforesaid Government, and given to it a faithful allegiance; when, contrary to the law of nations, in March, 1869, that said Government surrendered and transferred to Canada all the rights which it had or pretended to have in this territory, by transactions with which the people were considered unworthy to be made acquainted. And whereas, it is generally admitted that a people is at liberty to establish any form of Government it may consider suitable to its wants as soon as the power to which it was subject abandons it, or subjugates it without its consent to a foreign Power, we maintain that no right can be transferred to such foreign Power.

"Now, therefore, first, we, the representatives of the people, in Council assembled, in Upper Fort Garry, on the 24th day of November, 1869, having invoked the God of Nations also, relying on these fundamental moral principles, solemnly declare, in the name of the Constitution and our own names, before God and man, that from the day on which the Government we have always obeyed abandoned us by transferring to a strange Power the sacred authority confided to it, the people of Rupert's Land and the North-West became free and exempt from all allegiance to the Government.

"Second. That we refuse to recognize the authority of Canada, which pretends to have a right to coerce us and impose upon us a despotic form of Government still more contrary to our rights and interests as British subjects than was that Government to which we had subjected ourselves through necessity up to a recent date.

"Third. That by sending an expedition on the 1st of November ultimo, charged to drive Mr. William McDougall and his companions, coming in the name of Canada to rule us with the rod of despotism, without previous notification to that effect, we have but acted conformably to that sacred right which commands every citizen to offer energetic opposition to prevent his country from being enslaved.

"Fourth. That we continue, and shall continue to oppose with all our strength the establishing of the Canadian authority in our country under the announced form; and in case of persistence on the part of the Canadian Government to enforce its obnoxious policy upon us by force of arms, we protest beforehand against such an unjust and unlawful course; and we declare the said Canadian Government responsible before God and man for the innumerable evils which may be caused by so unwarrantable a course.

"Be it known, therefore, to the world in general, and to the Canadian Government in particular, that as we have always heretofore successfully defended our country in frequent wars with the neighbouring tribes of Indians who are now on friendly relations with us, we are firmly resolved in future, not less than in the past, to repel all invasions from whatsoever quarter they may come; and furthermore we do declare and proclaim, in the name of the people of Rupert's Land and the North-West, that we have, on the said 24th day of November, 1869, above-mentioned, established a Provisional Government, and hold it to be the only and lawful authority now in existence in Rupert's Land and the North-West, which claims the obedience and respect of the people; and that meanwhile we hold ourselves in readiness to enter into such relations with the Canadian Government as may be favourable for the good government and prosperity of this people. In support of this declaration, relying on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge ourselves on oath, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour to each other.

"Issued at Fort Garry, this 8th day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine.

"(Signed) JOHN BRUCE, President.
LOUIS RIEL, Secretary."

The following relates to the hoisting of a flag and the feeling with which Fenianism is regarded in the settlement:—

On Friday last, the 10th of December, the French went through the ceremony of hoisting the flag of their Provisional Government. About four o'clock in the afternoon, a number of armed men assembled in the Court yard of Fort Garry, and were addressed by Mr. Riell, who called upon them to support the new flag until their rights, as free born subjects of Queen Victoria, were respected. The idea of this movement is simply another step towards the grand scheme of a Provisional Government—an emblem, as it were, of its actual existence. After Mr. Riell's address, the flag (the design of which is the *fleur de lis* and shamrock combined) was hoisted, and a salute fired by the men in the Fort, at the same time the brass bands from St. Boniface struck up some lively tunes; again and again the salutes were fired, until at last they thought they had wasted powder enough. The bands, accompanied by a guard, then proceeded to the town and serenaded the citizens. The shamrock on the flag looks significant; but on inquiry I find that it is merely in compliment to Mr. O'Donohue, an Irishman, who has greatly assisted Mr. Riel in the present undertaking. This, at all events, is the only version of the matter I have heard. I sincerely hope there is no deeper meaning to the emblem. I am sure there is not so far as the general body of the French are concerned. Fenianism is to be dreaded, and, I assure you, the mass of the people here, both French and English, are as much adverse to the inroads of that body of adventurers as you are in Canada, and if I thought for one moment that Fenianism had the slightest influence in this movement amongst the French, I would only be too ready to acquaint you with the fact. At present (I cannot speak for the future) I believe there is no feeling in common between the people of this country and the Irish Republic.

The perplexing situation in which the English portion of the settlers placed is described by the same writer in his letter dated the 17th of December.

The Provisional Government seems to be the sticking point between a union of the two sides of the Settlement, and yet I would not be surprised should it be found necessary for the mutual protection of all parties to take some steps towards uniting, so that some such sort of temporary government as that proposed by the French will be formed by the whole Settlement as a body, for the sole reason that the people would then be in a better position to effect an arrangement with the Dominion. Under the circumstances, it would be far better, both for Canada and the Settlement, for the present as well as the future, that there should be a feeling of unity amongst the settlers, as it would be likely to effect a more speedy and durable arrangement with the existing difficulties. The English speaking people are more cautious than the French, and they are not certain how far the latter have compromised themselves in the present movement, and are therefore in doubts as to whether it would not be complicity in its late acts should they now join the Provisional Government. As it is, things

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are decidedly mixed and muddy. There are large sums of money due to the old government of Assiniboia for duties, &c.; the collection of these amounts by a Provisional Government, in which only a portion of the people are represented, would necessarily be attended with much difficulty and confusion. Debts have been already contracted by the French party, the payment of which will be apt to cause dissension should both sides unite, and the English be called upon to pay a share of them. The French now have the upper hand, having in their possession all the books, records, and due bills belonging to the late government of Assiniboia. Amongst other valuables they hold the Land Register, which, in itself, is a tickler; for should it be destroyed, or done away with, the title of every man in the country to his land would be lost.

A good deal has been said about an attempt which, it is alleged, Mr. M'Dougall made while at Pembina to organize a body of Swamp Indians for the purpose of enabling him to force an entrance into the Red River Country. This report excited considerable alarm and indignation at Pembina, and Mr. M'Dougall was "interviewed" on the subject. He said:—

I deny that the Indians are to be made use of under my direction. I do not think it necessary to arm the Indians. But the citizens might use several means in their attempts to put down this rebellion. I am not there to direct their actions. I have, however, organized a constabulary force in the Red River Settlements, clothed with full power of devising plans and means of its own with regard to the employment of any force deemed by them necessary and required to suppress this revolutionary movement. I am not responsible for the acts of Mr. Riel, nor of Dr. Schultz. If I was there, I would know how to deal with them, and would secure the good behaviour of the Indians! I was once appointed Indian agent, and knew very well how to get along with them. Probably it was on account of my experience with Indian affairs, my knowledge of their character, manners, &c., which I had the opportunity to study thoroughly, that I was sent here as their Governor.

At a later stage of the conversation he is reported to have said:—

I do not apprehend any danger from the Indians, as I do not think it will be necessary to use them. I have received communications from several chiefs, and I have seen and conversed with Indians from both sides of the line, and they all seem well disposed to recognize my authority, and allow me to go in. They know they would receive more from me than from Mr. Riel. Indians will always side with the party most able to give them plenty to eat.

The American official view of these occurrences has been given by the Governor of Minnesota, who in his annual message, delivered on the 6th of January, says:—

"The movement of the Dominion of Canada to establish its authority in the Red River country, on our northern border, has been resisted by the people of that remote and isolated region. While naturally our sympathies are with the people who strive to secure popular rights, the events in British America concern us chiefly as they may affect the peace

of our border. There has been reason to apprehend that the hostile Sioux, who, since the outbreak of 1852, have found a refuge in the British Territory, would be united to war, thus imminently endangering the settlement on the American side of the line. I have communicated with the President and the Commander of this military department, and am assured that the matter is receiving due attention."

The "inaugural" of the new Governor, Mr. Horace Austin, was delivered immediately after his predecessor, Governor Marshall, had presented his annual message. Mr. Austin referred to the rebellion in the following terms:—

"Owing, he said, to the disturbed condition of the British Provinces on our northern frontier, and the sense of sympathy felt by our people, hostilities are threatened on the part of certain bands of Sioux Indians, who, it is feared, will become involved in the controversy, and wreak their slumbering vengeance upon the American settlements if left in their present defenceless condition. It is therefore deemed proper that the State authorities should invite the General Government to station and maintain military forts in the vicinity of Pembina sufficient to insure protection to the people of that remote settlement."

That the apprehensions entertained on the American side of the frontier are not of an unreasonable character will be seen from the following remarks made by a correspondent, whose letter is dated Fort Garry, 18th December:—

"In view of the probable results of the events of the past four weeks, I may mention that, should this winter pass without such active opposition to the rule of the insurgent party, it may lead to bloodshed; complications of a serious nature will probably take place in the spring, when it is possible there may be a large gathering of Indians from the West in the Settlement, and almost certainly an influx of the whole of the half-breed population of the Plains. The latter may, I am credibly informed, produce two thousand men capable of carrying arms.

"The French half-breed party lying in Red River is certainly accustomed to the performance of rough work, but I think it is unquestionable that the most formidable portion of the fighting population will be recruited from the party known as 'Winterers,' who live upon the Plains. They are thoroughly inured to all the privations of camp life in all seasons, experienced in savage warfare, adepts in all the arts of horsemanship and management of the gun, and at home almost everywhere on a battle field extending from Red River to the Rocky Mountains. Their organization for purposes of the chase is quite susceptible of adaptation, with the utmost possible advantage, to those of war.

"It is, therefore a matter of the most serious consideration, in the event of the Canadian Government determining to put down the present rebellion with a strong hand, that the commencement of military operations at Red River will be but the beginning of disturbances throughout the entire Indian country. The Settlement is connected by so many ties with the whole of Rupert's Land that the lighting up of the flame of Civil War within it will be the breaking out of a conflagration which, like the Prairie fires, will devastate the Territory, gathering strength with its outward progress, and growing more irresistible as the circuit of its ravages expands. The distinction between combatant and non-combatant will become unknown, as has occurred even in the present disturbance;

unwilling recruits will be impressed, and compelled to shoulder a musket in the common cause. The result may be the extermination of human life on a large scale."

It is not necessary to dwell at any length upon the events which have subsequently taken place; the return of Mr. McDougall and his party to Canada; the further arrests of Canadians at the Red River Settlement; the mission of Father Thiebault, which seems to have been followed by a reaction against Riel; and the intended mission—according to report—Bishop Taché, the eminent French Canadian prelate. But it may be desirable to correct a misapprehension which has been occasioned by the announcement that a new paper, which has been started at the Red River, advocates annexation to the United States. The Editor of this paper is a legal gentleman from Illinois, and there is no reason whatever to suppose that he reflects the opinions of any considerable party; nor does it appear that anything like an annexation fever has sprung up in Minnesota. Instead of suggesting another "Abyssinian expedition" in the spring, as an English Journal has done, the most influential newspaper in the province of Ontario offers this wise counsel in its issue of the 20th of January:—

"But many will probably say, Would you place in the hands of handful of men the control of the entire Territory? By no means. Such a course would be absurd. It could only be requisite to set aside as the nucleus of a Province that part which is already populated, to divide this into municipalities, and to give over its immediate control into the hands of the Executive, under a Lieutenant-Governor, reserving, to the Dominion, authority over such portions of the land as are not as yet opened up or laid under cultivation. In effect, what we have said has been, Make of the Red River a Province, and not a dependency; give its people a right in their own Government; do not treat the people of the Territory we have acquired as conquered barbarians, to be ruled by Canadian officials; but make them, by pursuing a prudent and conciliatory course, well-affected and useful allies, instead of resentful and rebelliously inclined subjects."

